

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 25-47 and 63-69 are pending in the present application. Claim 25 is the independent claim. Claim 25 has been amended. New claims 63-69 have been added.

I. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 112

In the Office Action, at page 3, claims 25-47 were rejected under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite. Independent claim 25 has been amended to be allowable and remove the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, as indicated by the Examiner on page 8 of the Office Action. Claims 26-47 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 25 as amended. Accordingly, withdrawal of these § 112 rejections is respectfully requested.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102/103

In the Office Action, at pages 3-6, claims 25-27, 31, and 42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for obviousness over Lewis et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,115,624).

Independent claim 25 has been amended to be allowable, as indicated by the Examiner on page 8 of the Office Action. Accordingly, withdrawal of the § 102(e)/103(a) rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 26-27, 31, and 42 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 25, and include all the features of claim 25, plus additional features that are not discussed or suggested by the reference relied upon. Therefore, claims 26-27, 31, and 42 patentably distinguish over the reference relied upon for at least the reasons noted above. Accordingly, withdrawal of these § 102(e)/103(a) rejections is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, at pages 6-7, claims 30 and 32-41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lewis et al.

Claims 30 and 32-41 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 25, and include all the features of claim 25, plus additional features that are not discussed or suggested by the reference relied upon. Therefore, claims 30 and 32-41 patentably distinguish over the reference relied upon for at least the reasons noted above. Accordingly, withdrawal of these § 103(a) rejections is respectfully requested.

III. Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action, at page 8, claims 28-29 and 43-47 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to overcome the rejections under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As discussed above, independent claim 25 has been amended to be allowable, as indicated by the Examiner. Claims 28-29 and 43-47 remain un-amended and now depend either directly or indirectly from amended independent claim 25, as considered allowable by the Examiner, and include all the features of claim 25, plus the additional features that have been acknowledged as patentable by the Examiner. Accordingly, withdrawal of these objections is respectfully requested.

IV. New Claims

New claims 63-69 have been added. In the Office Action, at page 8, dependent claims 28-29 and 43-47 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to overcome the rejections under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

New claim 63 corresponds to claim 28 and has been rewritten in independent form to be allowable, as indicated by the Examiner. New claim 64 depends from claim 63 and corresponds to claim 29. Thus, it is submitted that new claims 63-64 are in a condition suitable for allowance.

New claim 65 corresponds to claim 43 and has been rewritten in independent form to be allowable, as indicated by the Examiner. New claims 66-69 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 65 and correspond to claims 44-47. Thus, it is submitted that new claims 65-69 are in a condition suitable for allowance.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

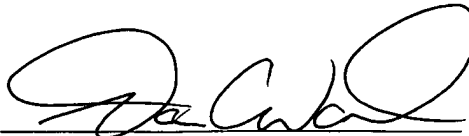
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 1-29-08

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